AF-13 – Increase Forest Health (pest/disease, invasive species) Risk Reduction Programs

An umbrella option that includes:

- Drought management programs - tree selection, placement, protection against drought
- Flood and riparian management programs
- Watershed management programs - stand retention, enhancement and management

Benefit/Cost of Reducing CO_2e:

Colorado: less than 0.1-1.0 MMt; uncertain costs[17]

Assessment: High Priority. Bin B. 15 out of 22 votes.

Healthy forests are of critical importance for carbon and other issues.

Healthy forests take up carbon and sequester it and are less likely to lose it catastrophically. Healthy grasslands and aspen may sequester more carbon than other mixes of trees and plants.

Aspens are declining throughout the West and no one apparently knows exactly why. Douglas fir forests are encroaching on aspen and they use more water. Invasive species, such as cheatgrass, increase the risk of fire. Pinyon-Juniper can be invasive and create increased fire hazard, if not properly managed.

Carbon issues could be integrated with rangeland health, healthy watersheds, fisheries, and aspen concerns. The State should continue to support the Utah Watershed Initiative and the Utah Partnership for Conservation and Development.

This is also likely to be an issue in adaptation.

While Bin A was originally recommended by the sector group, both BRAC and SWG members felt that Bin B would be more appropriate because this type of policy would be easier to do on private rather than public lands.

[17] A recent Colorado forest health report raises concerns. That state lost 1,000 square miles of forests due to multiple stresses of drought and beetles. Drought is the primary stress. When trees are weakened, beetles have more impact. It may be that warmer temperatures also increase the generations of beetles and fewer die during winter months.